

A Tribute to an Artist who Loved Fall

By Kristina Ives

I will never forget how a bright orange tree changed my life. Driving around the bend on a busy highway in Northern Virginia, I remember seeing a tree so vibrant and bright, I felt as though it was on fire! Its brilliantly orange leaves stood out against the green trees surrounding it. The sight of it made the hair on my arms stand up and tears of joy fill my eyes; I had never seen anything more beautiful in nature.

As a kid growing up in Southern California, I had never seen the leaves change color. I could remember my mother, Mary, telling me about fall, the changing of the leaves, and brisk weather that came with it. She talked about all the colors and how warm it made you feel. I had looked at pictures and imagined the feelings she described but seeing that bright orange tree on a busy Virginia highway felt better than I had ever imagined.

I called Mary right away. I described the vibrant colors and explained to her how beautiful it was. She just giggled, understanding exactly how I felt. The first painting Mary ever painted captured the feeling I was describing to her. "Season's End" features the historic Frontenac Post Office on Round Island during the beautiful autumn months here in the 1000 Islands. Amongst a backdrop of green trees speckled with only few golden leaves, stands a single bright, orange tree. It stands as a glimmering signal of change for the season, a visual reminder that the Post Office must close once again.

Mary loved this time of year, especially because of the color pallet left for our viewing pleasure. It's really no surprise that she would depart us in this time of year, when the colors of fall are starting to change and things are really closing for the season. It's a season of warm, home cooked meals, leaf piles for kids to play in and a time for family and friendship: all things Mary loved about this time of year.

Mary wanted everyone to feel as she and I did, looking at the beautiful fall foliage. She wanted you to see the trees and all their colors, feel the warmth of love, and appreciate the changing of the seasons, knowing that it is just the beat of time marching on: another chance to create a beautiful life.

She would want you to see the beauty in your own life and appreciate all that God provides. Mary had an eye for the beauty in everything; she always made you feel beautiful and wanted you to feel the beauty that exists in this world. If Mary were here, she would encourage you to capture beauty around and within you, the moment you recognize it: to embrace it and share it with those you love, preferably with a glass of wine in your hand as well!